

# FAR NORTHWEST

## DEVELOPMENT AREA

Department of Development and Planning



City of Chicago, Richard J. Daley, Mayor

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# Far Northwest Development Area

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City of Chicago, Richard J. Daley, Mayor

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Lewis W. Hill, Commissioner of Development and Planning

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August 1968

## Contents

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|         |   |
|---------|---|
| page 2  | Purpose of the Development Area Reports |
| page 3  | Introduction                            |
| page 5  | Planning Framework—Objectives           |
| page 6  | Existing Conditions and Recommendations |
| page 6  | Population Characteristics              |
| page 6  | Residence                               |
| page 8  | Recreation                              |
| page 9  | Education                               |
| page 11 | Social Programs                         |
| page 12 | Public Safety and Health                |
| page 13 | Business                                |
| page 14 | Industry                                |
| page 15 | Transportation                          |
| page 17 | Scheduled Capital Improvements          |
| page 18 | Summary                                 |



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## PURPOSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT AREA REPORTS

The Development Area reports have been prepared to inform Chicago citizens of the meaning of the *Comprehensive Plan's* recommendations for each area of the city, to aid in the exchange of information about community needs between citizens and government that is necessary to the development of a cooperative planning process, and to facilitate the coordination of plans and programs for community improvements. There are 16 Development Areas, covering the entire city, each with a population of 150,000 to 300,000 people and with a land area of 6 to 20 square miles.

The Development Area reports suggest land use changes, residential and industrial improvements, transportation improvements and community facilities and social programs needed to achieve the goals of the *Comprehensive Plan* in each area. The reports are intended to stimulate community discussion of issues, problems, and solutions. This discussion will lead to formulation of a planning framework for each area to be used by government and citizens for scheduling and co-ordinating programs and community improvements.

The various kinds of projects that the city undertakes need to be co-ordinated if they are to produce maximum benefits for the communities they serve. Experience has demonstrated that Chicago is too large to deal with as a whole in co-ordinating and scheduling specific projects. Thus, the Development Areas represent a very practical means of focusing the planning process on localized needs and conditions while remaining within the context of city-wide *Comprehensive Plan* policies and goals.

The recommendations in the Development Area reports are ideas and suggestions for consideration. They do not represent final plans for the areas, nor do they cover all issues. The reports recognize that not all planning problems have clear or immediate solutions and in some cases, questions are raised in the expectation that the best solution will evolve through community discussion.

### The Review Process

Four steps will be followed in reviewing and revising the Development Area reports:

—Each Development Area report will be distributed to civic organizations and other private groups, both within the local area and city-wide.

—Representatives of City Government will meet with groups and individuals in each area to discuss the report. Findings will be modified, other ideas sought, and approaches to resolving issues will be explored.

—Appropriate revisions in the proposals will then be made, which will result in a planning framework for the Development Area. After public discussion, the planning framework would be adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission as a policy guide in reviewing projects and programs for the area.

—Using the planning framework as a guide the Department of Development and Planning will work with other agencies to modify and co-ordinate programs and projects to meet the area's critical needs and to achieve local objectives.

Chicago is constantly changing. Therefore, from time to time, each planning framework will be reviewed and adjusted or amended to reflect new needs or changes in objectives as they are identified in the continuing process of planning.

### From Plans to Action

In recent years new transportation facilities, urban renewal, and other public and private developments have greatly improved the city's appearance and livability, and the opportunities and capabilities of its people. Still greater effort and further improvement will be necessary if Chicago is to meet its commitment to the strategic objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan*. In the coming years sections of the city must be rebuilt or rehabilitated to meet the rising expectations for living standards of all its people. New ways must be found for meeting social concerns, for strengthening capabilities and for broadening opportunities. Achieving the kind of city envisioned in the *Comprehensive Plan* will call for the ideas, widespread support, and involvement of all of the people of Chicago.



## FAR NORTHWEST DEVELOPMENT AREA

The Far Northwest Development Area includes the community areas of Edison Park, Norwood Park, Jefferson Park, Forest Glen, most of Portage Park, and small parts of North Park, Albany Park, Irving Park, and Dunning. The approximately fifteen square mile area is bounded by the city limits on the north, Pulaski Road on the east, Addison Street on the south, and an irregular western boundary extending westward as far as Canfield and Ozanam avenues.

For the most part, the Far Northwest communities originated during the early 1800's as independent villages surrounded by prairie and farmland. From township status, the communities elected annexation to the City of Chicago in the late 1800's. Following annexation, transportation improvements increased accessibility to the city and stimulated the area's development as a desirable residential community. A period of great growth came with the national building boom of the 1920's. Subsequent development in the 1940's and 1960's extended to Edison Park, Norwood Park and Forest Glen, supplying most of the Development Area's current housing stock.

Today the Far Northwest remains primarily a low density residential area with 58 per cent of the housing in single family homes. The area has an almost entirely white population, 46 per cent of which is of foreign stock, including people of first and second generation Polish, German, Italian and Swedish extraction. The population of the Far Northwest Development Area is also characterized by higher than city averages in income and education.

Despite the fact that only 4.4 per cent of the Development Area's housing supply was considered deficient<sup>1</sup> in the 1960 census, compared to 22.6 per cent for the total city, policies for the Far Northwest Development Area should be directed toward maintenance of the quality of its communities to prevent the deterioration that often

accompanies aging of the housing stock. In light of this, *The Comprehensive Plan of Chicago* designates the southeast corner of the area as a rehabilitation and maintenance area, where community improvement projects would emphasize conservation and rehabilitation. The remaining portion of the Far Northwest Development Area has been designated as a maintenance area which means that private efforts should be sufficient to preserve the area's good quality.

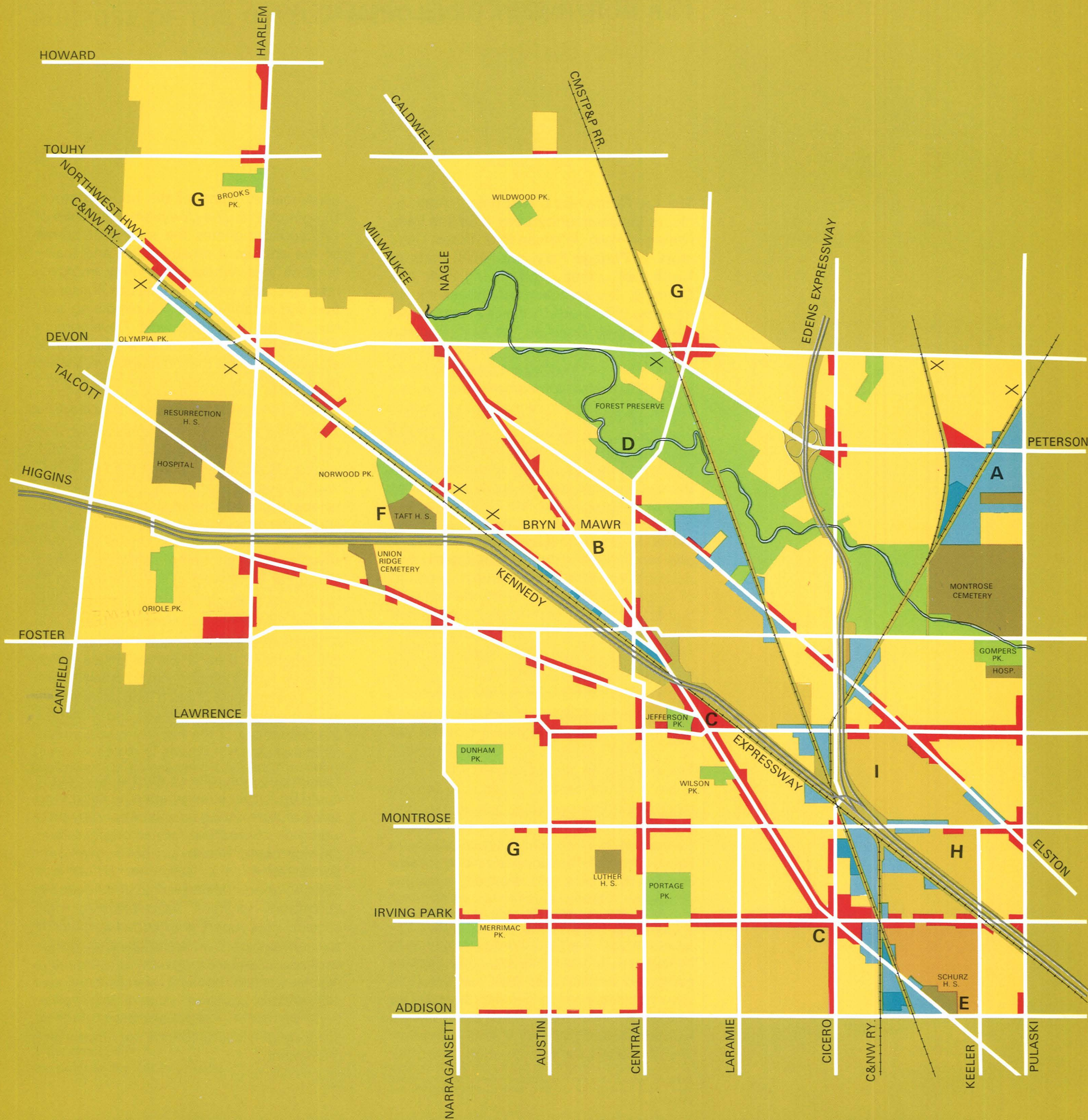
The Edens and Kennedy expressways, and the Chicago and North Western and Milwaukee Road railways serve the Far Northwest Development Area. Industrial development has occurred along the railroads, and commercial development has lined the frontages of major streets. One of the city's seven regional shopping districts is located in the Far Northwest at the intersection of Cicero Avenue, Milwaukee Avenue, and Irving Park Road.

A distinctive feature of the Far Northwest Development Area is the extensive forest preserve land located in its northeast section. This expanse of open land doubles the available recreational acreage and enhances the desirability of the Far Northwest's residential areas.

The unique character of the Far Northwest could be further strengthened by improving some of the existing conditions and by providing an appropriate framework for future development. Residents have been attracted to the Far Northwest by its low density, good housing stock, and adequate community facilities. As a basis for discussion, this report is intended to present an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Far Northwest Development Area in terms of housing, environment, social services, business, industry, transportation, recreation, and education, and to propose general directions for future improvement.

<sup>1</sup>Deficient housing units include the following census categories: sound units lacking some or all plumbing facilities, all deteriorating and dilapidated units.













## Planning Framework

### Characteristics Far Northwest Development Area

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Residence in Good Condition                    |    |
| Residence in Need of Some Improvement          |    |
| Residence in Need of Major Repair              |    |
| Business Concentration                         |    |
| Industry in Good Condition                     |    |
| Industry in Need of Some Improvement           |   |
| Park or Forest Preserve                        |  |
| Institution                                    |  |
| <b>A</b> Industrial Park                       |   |
| <b>B</b> Diagonal Street                       |   |
| <b>C</b> Traffic Congestion                    |   |
| <b>D</b> Potential for River Improvements      |   |
| <b>E</b> High School Lacking Open Space        |   |
| <b>F</b> Overcrowded High School               |   |
| <b>G</b> Well Maintained Residential Community |   |
| <b>H</b> Inadequate Recreational Facilities    |   |
| <b>I</b> Rehabilitation and Maintenance Needed |   |
| X Railroad Crossing at Grade                   |   |

### Objectives

The proposals of *The Comprehensive Plan of Chicago* are designed to achieve two basic human objectives: individual capability to act, assured by essential standards of the physical and social environment, and individual opportunity for variety, range of choice, and personal advancement. Within this framework, the planning objectives for the Far Northwest Development Area are:

- 1 Maintain high quality residential areas which meet the particular needs of families with children. Encourage a variety of housing type and size and increase the available supply of standard housing on a basis of equal opportunity for all residents.
- 2 Increase the quantity of easily accessible local parks and improve the quality of existing parks. Expand year-round facilities and provide more extensive indoor recreational programs.
- 3 Improve school facilities to meet the needs of the Far Northwest and to fulfill city-wide educational objectives. Replace rented library branches with library-owned buildings in convenient locations.
- 4 Increase the availability of public and

private services to families and individuals in the areas of mental health, and family counseling with special emphasis on planned activity for the young and the elderly.

5 Enlist community support for both crime and fire prevention programs, and provide modern Police and Fire Department facilities where needed.

6 Consolidate in business centers strips of commercial development now along major streets. Locate community services, including health centers and library branches, in the improved business centers.

7 Prevent deterioration of well-maintained industrial concentrations and encourage rehabilitation required in scattered areas. Increase off-street parking and loading facilities in industrial areas.

8 Improve major streets to reduce congestion and remove unwanted traffic from residential areas. Provide adequate rail crossings on major streets. Provide sufficient off-street parking and waiting facilities for cars and buses at the terminal of the Kennedy rapid transit line.



## Existing Conditions and Recommendations

### Population Characteristics

At the time of the 1960 Census, the Far Northwest Development Area population of 180,000 persons constituted five per cent of the city total. Nearly half of these people were of foreign stock, defined as either born in another country, or of foreign parentage. The largest nationalities represented were Polish, German, Swedish, and Italian. Almost all of the Development Area's residents were white.

Children under 18 years of age comprised 29 per cent of the population, slightly less than the city-wide proportion. Eleven per cent of the population was over 65 years of age, compared to the city average of ten per cent. Population characteristics, however, varied throughout the Development Area.

The most recently developed sections of the area were populated by younger families. Edison and Norwood Parks had higher than city average proportions of persons under 18, and lower than city average percentages of persons 65 years of age and older. Forest Glen also had a low percentage of persons over 65, but paralleled the city-wide average for persons under 18. The number of persons over 65 years of age was highest in the older community areas of Irving Park, Portage Park, Albany Park, and North Park.

The median number of school years completed by residents of the area was above the city average of 10.0 years, except in the small parts of North Park and Dunning included in the Development Area. The highest educational levels were found in Edison Park and Forest Glen. Family income was also well above the city median in the whole Development Area. Six per cent of the families had an income under \$3000, compared to the 14 per cent city-wide average. In the Far Northwest, 33 per cent of the families had incomes over \$10,000 per year, compared to 21 per cent in the total city. The main occupational category was craftsmen and foremen, except in Forest Glen, where the largest numbers of working males were in managerial and professional occupations.

Between 1950 and 1960, the Far Northwest Development Area population showed

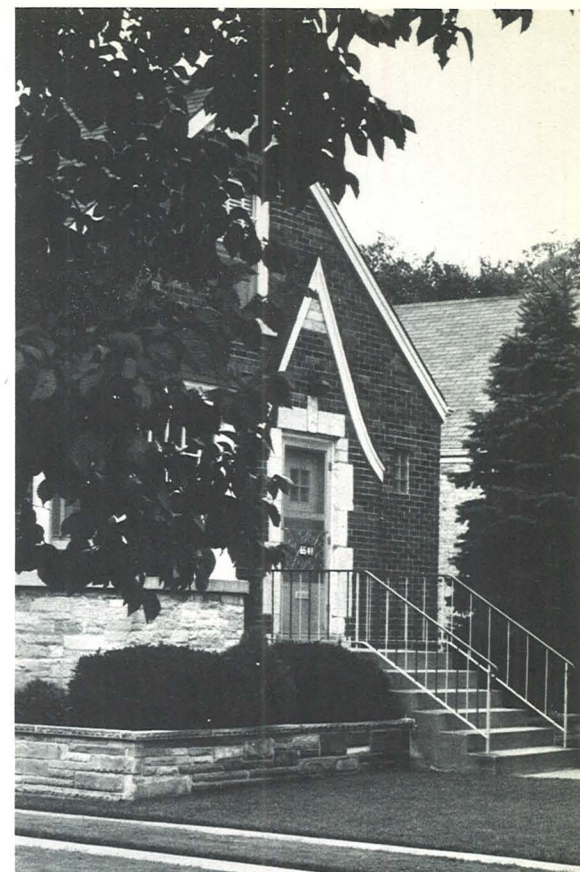
an over-all increase of 12 per cent. However, the 1950-60 population change varied greatly among community areas. In Edison Park, Norwood Park, Jefferson Park, and Forest Glen, where there was a great increase in the housing supply due to new construction, population increases ranged from 17 to 60 per cent. On the other hand, losses in population ranged from a decrease of 3 per cent in Portage Park to a decrease of 54 per cent in one census tract in North Park. In the latter case, the percentage is based on a small total of housing units in a predominantly industrial area. In the Development Area as a whole, 37 per cent of the 1960 population over 5 years of age had lived in a different house in the preceding five years, compared to a city-wide average of 53 per cent. Thus, despite the various losses and gains in the community areas in the Far Northwest, the Development Area as a whole showed a relatively high degree of residential stability in 1960. Estimates of the 1966 population, however, indicate that only Edison Park and Norwood Park are still increasing in population, while the other communities are showing slight declines.

### Residence

In 1960, there were 58,525 housing units in the Far Northwest Development Area, or five per cent of the city total. The Far Northwest is an area of low-density housing, with a high proportion of single-family homes and duplexes. The quality of the housing is generally very good, with a significant portion of the total built between 1940 and 1960, and the older housing is well maintained.

The atmosphere of most of the Far Northwest as a low density community is produced by the quality and type of housing, and by the varied pattern of streets and railroad tracks running through the Development Area. In addition, the low proportion of industrial and major institutional land use, combined with relatively large open spaces between the residences further increases the feeling of spaciousness in the area.

In 1960, 58 per cent of the dwellings were single-family units, compared to 24 per cent for the total city, and 24 per cent were two-unit dwellings, again higher than the 20 per cent for the whole city. The largest concentration of single-family dwellings occurs in Forest Glen and west of Austin Boule-

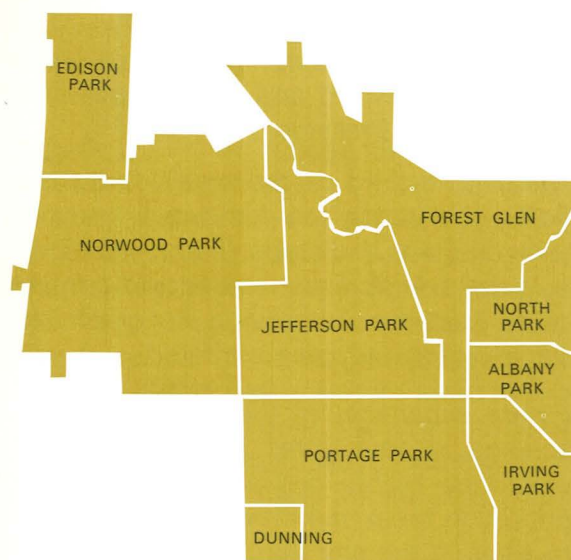


Many residents of the Far Northwest pay careful attention to maintenance of their property.

vard. Two, three, and four dwelling unit structures occur predominantly south of Forest Glen and east of Austin Boulevard. Five or more unit dwellings, only 11 per cent of the total housing, are concentrated south of Lawrence Avenue and east of Central Avenue, although this type of housing is increasing in other areas as recent construction tends to be of higher density. New apartment buildings and single-family homes are scattered throughout the Development Area, with concentrations along the major access streets in Edison Park, Norwood Park, and Forest Glen. Some of these structures have replaced large single-family homes, but most are on formerly vacant sites, continuing a trend towards higher land coverage and increased population density.

Another significant feature of the Development Area is the high rate of owner occupied residences—68 per cent in 1960, compared to 38 per cent for Chicago. The total area had only 4.4 per cent deficient housing, compared to 22.6 per cent for the city with none of the individual community areas exceeding the city-wide average. Only a few small parts of the area are in need of housing improvement programs.





### Community Areas of the Far Northwest Development Area

The *Local Community Fact Book* identifies boundaries of community areas in Chicago for the purpose of compilation of information on local communities within the metropolitan area. The above map shows the community areas included in the Far Northwest Development Area. Edison Park, Norwood Park, Jefferson Park, and Forest Glen are totally included, while parts of Dunning, Portage Park, Irving Park, Albany Park, and North Park lie within the Development Area boundaries.

The Irving Park community area has the highest deficiency rate at 13 per cent. Within this community area, the small section bounded by Addison Street, Irving Park Road, Tripp Avenue, and the Milwaukee Road railroad tracks contains 33 per cent deficient housing. Much of the housing there consists of large brick or frame houses, originally intended for single-family occupancy, but now converted, as the character of the neighborhood population has changed to older families of lower income and decreased family size. In Norwood Park, one census tract bounded roughly by Avondale, Bryn Mawr, Oketo, Oriole, and Devon avenues, contained in 1960 13 per cent deficient housing. A program of intensive code enforcement could be of benefit here.

As part of its Residential Improvement Plan, The *Comprehensive Plan* suggests that the southeast portion of the Far Northwest Development Area from Addison Street to Lawrence Avenue, Pulaski Road to Laramie Avenue, be designated a rehabilitation and maintenance area. Both public and private programs should be directed towards encouraging conservation and improving the quality of life in this area. A program of intensified code enforcement could begin to make immediate improvements.

One of the esthetically pleasing aspects of the Far Northwest Development Area is the varied age and diverse style of the residential units found in many sections. 66 per cent of the housing stock was built before 1939, compared to 86 per cent for the city as a whole. Within this range of homes are single-family dwellings both of brick and frame construction, duplexes, and some three or more unit structures. The remaining 35 per cent of the housing included in the 1960 Census was built between 1940 and 1960, compared to 15 per cent in the same time period for the whole city. Since 1960, building permits for the area show a net increase of 3672 units, mainly multi-unit buildings along major streets. Single-family units are the second largest category of housing being built at present. The largest amount of new construction since 1960 has been west of Narragansett Avenue, although scattered new construction has occurred throughout the Development Area.



Many older buildings in the area are well maintained.

The *Comprehensive Plan* has suggested that areas in outlying parts of the city, close to transit and commuter stops or to expressway access points, would be developed gradually with housing of higher density than that of the surrounding area. The *Comprehensive Plan* policy for residential density for the Far Northwest suggests medium density in the southeast section of the Development Area and clusters of medium density along the Kennedy Expressway.

An example of a location for higher density clusters related to corridors of high accessibility would be the junction of the Cross-town, Edens, and Kennedy expressways. Higher density housing at selected locations in the high accessibility corridors could be constructed to provide for families who prefer locating further from the central city, but perhaps not in single-family dwellings.

The housing needs of the elderly in the Far Northwest should be carefully studied. Many people over 65 years of age are home owners with limited incomes. As a result, the feasibility of their making extensive home improvements decreases. Publicly assisted housing for the elderly could be useful in this part of the city. This is of particular relevance to the southeast section of the Development Area where the numbers of older homes and persons over 65 years of age are the largest.



A recent trend in the Far Northwest Development Area is the increase in condominium-style housing.



## Recreation

The Chicago Park District land in the Far Northwest Development Area totals 205 acres, slightly more than one acre per 1000 persons. Most of the parks are small neighborhood facilities with only five being larger than ten acres. School playgrounds and the edges of the area's extensive forest preserves provide additional recreation space, increasing the average acreage per 1000 persons to two acres, the minimum recommended by the *Comprehensive Plan*. Park acreage is unevenly distributed, however, with Irving Park and the eastern portion of Portage Park falling below the two acre per 1000 residents minimum target. Priority should be given to these communities in the Park District's land acquisition plans for the Far Northwest Development Area.

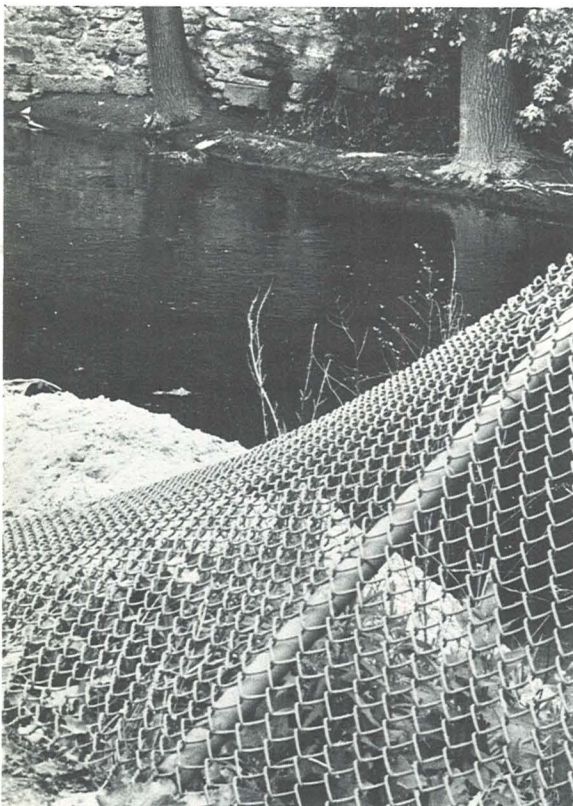
Fourteen parks in the Far Northwest Development Area have fieldhouses or recreation buildings providing indoor facilities. A new fieldhouse, expected to be completed in the spring of 1969, is being built in Merrimac Park, and the contract for a new fieldhouse for Olympia Park will be awarded by the end of 1968. Facilities for active sports are provided in most of the parks, with baseball fields occupying large areas of park space.

Tennis courts are available in five of the area's parks, and swimming pools are located in Norwood and Portage parks and in the Forest Preserve.

About one-third of the area's thirty-three parks offer organized community programs including arts and crafts, drama workshops, and day camps. Emphasis should continue to be placed on improving the quality and variety of the programs offered.

Future expansion of the area's total park acreage to four acres per 1000 persons would be highly desirable, although first priority in local park development must go to areas in the city that are below the two acres per 1000 persons minimum. In areas now meeting the minimum target, the *Comprehensive Plan* provides for continued development of parks and for additions from available land to preserve appropriately located open space.

The accessibility of parks and the quality of the recreation facilities they contain are considerations more important than acreage alone. Many parks in the Far Northwest Development Area have large open expanses of sports fields with only peripheral



Park improvements in the Far Northwest should include upgrading the river and its banks to provide recreational facilities for boating.



Edison Park's attractive landscaping makes it one of the most pleasant parks in the Far Northwest Development Area.

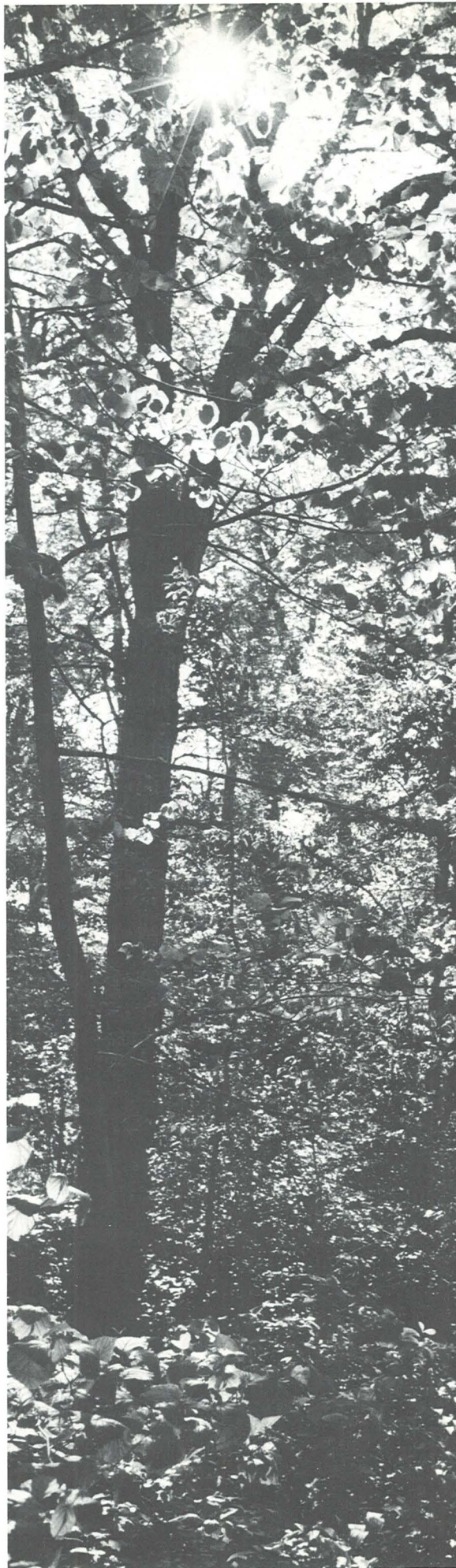


areas of landscaped recreational space available for passive uses. Landscaped areas would provide people of all ages with pleasant places to relax or stroll through their community.

Upgrading of the Chicago River could be undertaken in conjunction with development and expansion of park facilities. The river flows circuitously through the Development Area, largely within Forest Preserve land. At certain points it lies in close proximity to residential areas. At present, the condition of the river is not an asset to the community, and its potential as a source of recreation is not being used. In some places, it is fenced off or used for indiscriminate dumping.

At some points, where the river is in close relationship to residential sections and thoroughfares, emphasis should be placed on river bank parks through the use of distinctively designed landscaped and paved walkways to serve as linkages between the community and the river.

Beautification of the river must begin with a clean-up campaign and pollution controls to improve the murky quality of the water. Where required, water control measures, including weirs or low dams, flood control, swamp elimination, and mosquito abatement, should be employed to make the river a more dominant and attractive element in recreational facilities.



The Cook County Forest Preserves offer a pleasant refuge from urban intensity.

## Education

In 1967, 12,650 elementary students and 7,150 high school students were enrolled in public schools in the Far Northwest Development Area. Parochial schools enrolled an additional 16,400 elementary students and 2,300 high school students. The total 1967 enrollment in the Area's public schools shows an increase of 1.1 per cent over the 1965 student population, as compared to a 3.3 per cent city-wide increase.

Twenty-two elementary schools, five with classroom branches, and two high schools, each with branch facilities, are located in the Far Northwest Development Area. The facilities, though not overcrowded, are in need of general upgrading and expansion. The majority of the schools were built between 1925 and 1945. Nine schools, including Schurz High School, are over 50 years old. Improvement of the facilities of Taft High School, with 25 per cent of its student body presently using classrooms in the Norwood Park Elementary School, can be expected to receive priority in the Board of Education's long range plans for the Far Northwest Development Area.

According to the Board of Education, a classroom with 33 or more pupils is considered overcrowded. The average class size in the Far Northwest schools in 1967 was 32 pupils per room, although some individual schools have higher pupil-classroom ratios.

At many of the schools in the Far Northwest Development Area, the site acreage is above the Board of Education's minimum goal of 3.5 acres for elementary schools. Taft High School occupies a site of approximately sixteen acres and is located adjacent to Norwood Park. Schurz High School lacks adequate open space. The building itself occupies much of the site, and space available for recreational uses is limited. Some older schools might be replaced by new schools on larger sites. The Department of Development and Planning, in cooperation with the Board of Education and the Chicago Park District, recommends that schools be located adjacent to park facilities. This park-school principle illustrates the statement of the *Comprehensive Plan* that the school is an integral part of a community.

Whether the school is viewed in the context of a community institution or in the context





The dramatic building design of Schurz High School has led to its designation as a Chicago Architectural Landmark.

of performing its specific task of education, it remains that patterns of social isolation of one group from another seriously limit the educational process. As has been noted in a national study, "Racial isolation in the schools fosters attitudes and behavior that perpetuate isolation in other areas of American life."<sup>2</sup>

One objective in attempting to combat racial and social isolation in the school system is an increase in the achievement level of disadvantaged students, of whom a disproportionate number are members of minority groups. Perhaps an even more important objective is the expansion of democratic attitudes contributing to the growth and maturity of all students.

An approach to this issue has been undertaken by the Board of Education. A voluntary busing program has been instituted, permitting a number of students from the May and Spencer elementary schools in the Far West Development Area to attend less crowded and heretofore all-white schools, two of which are in the southwest part of the Far Northwest Development Area.

As this special community focus is placed on the schools it becomes more important than ever to insure that the quality of the programs offered is held at the highest possible level. Many special programs will be required to insure that differing needs are met.

Mayfair Junior College, located in the Far Northwest Development Area, presently serves as the day division of Amundsen Junior College. The long range plan of the Chicago City College Board calls for a full-

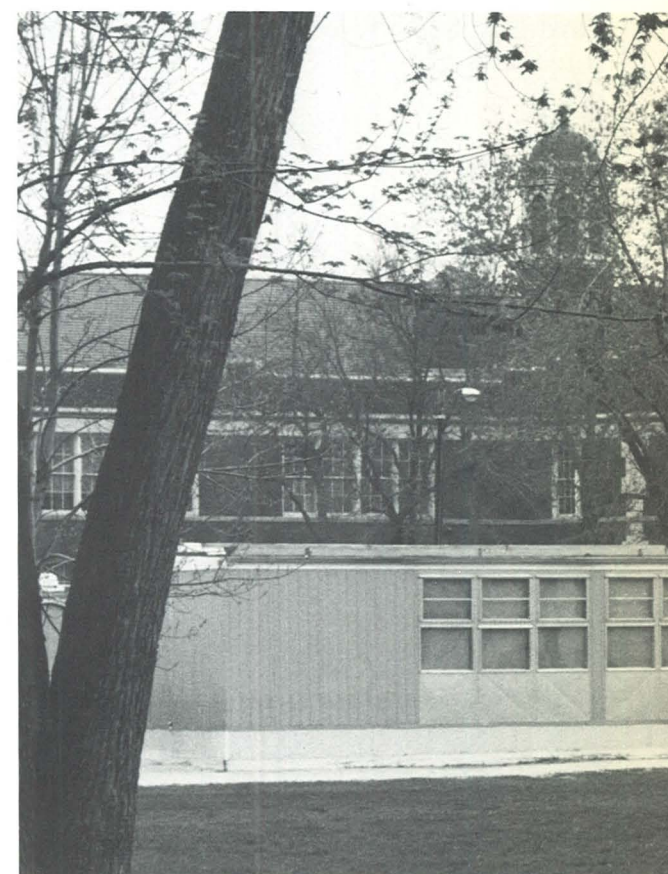
time campus located near the intersection of the Crosstown and Kennedy expressways.

### Libraries

The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends a system of library-owned branches conveniently available to all residents within a reasonable radius of their homes. The Far Northwest Development Area has six library branches in rented facilities and four traveling libraries. Although none of the facilities meet the standard of being library-owned buildings, they are well distributed throughout the area. The Norwood-Edison rented branch library will be replaced in the summer of 1968 by a new library-owned building located near the present facility. Also in the summer of 1968, construction is scheduled to begin on a new library-owned facility for the Jefferson branch library on Lawrence Avenue. Because of an overlap in service areas that will be created by the completion of the new Jefferson branch, the Portage Park rented branch now located on Irving Park Road will be relocated one mile south to Belmont Avenue.

The *Comprehensive Plan* further recommends that branches be located in or near business centers because of the increased usage of library facilities placed in centers of community activity.

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<sup>2</sup> United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Racial Isolation in the Public Schools*, vol. 1, p. 110



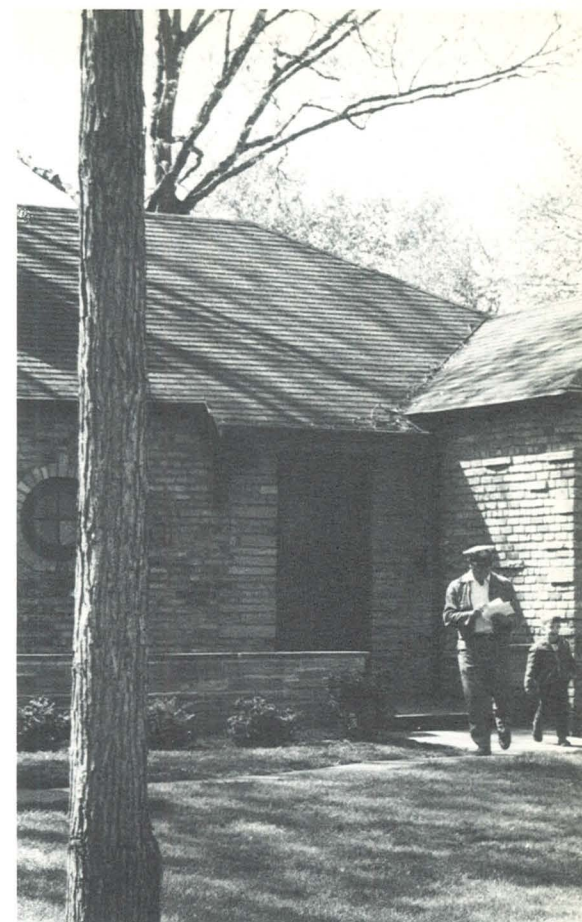
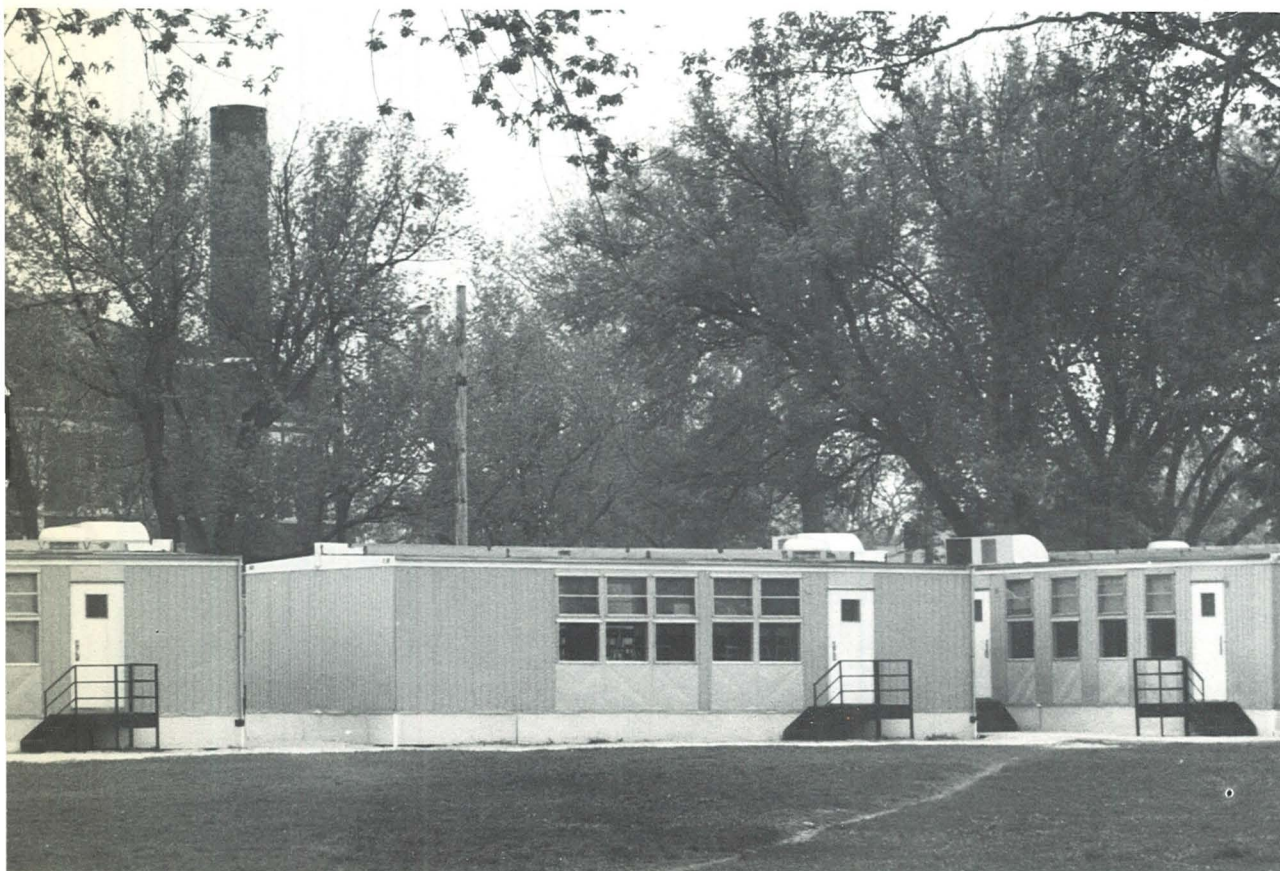
### Social Programs

As other sections in this report indicate, the Far Northwest Development Area is generally characterized by residential, educational, and economic strength. This strength is carried over into the social sphere as well.

Rates in the Far Northwest Development Area for public assistance, ill health, and crime are low. Two-tenths of one per cent of the Far Northwest's residents receive some type of public assistance, with the largest proportion of people receiving Old Age Assistance. The numbers of new tuberculosis cases reported, infant death rate, and first admissions to mental institutions are also low. Police Department reports indicate below average crime rates. Juvenile delinquency rates declined between 1962 and 1965 from the previous three years in all the community areas except Forest Glen and Albany Park, which showed increases of 1.9 per cent and 1.7 per cent respectively.

Public social services for the Far Northwest are available through local offices of the Chicago Board of Health Infant Welfare Station, the Chicago Commission on Youth Welfare, the Social Security Administration, the Youth Opportunity Center operated by

cation facilities in the Development Area are especially overcrowded on the secondary level. Norwood Park Elementary school is now used for Taft High School students, while elementary pupils are taught in mobile units.



Attractive single-family homes abound in the Forest Glen community.

the Illinois State Employment Service, ten Board of Education Social Centers at public schools, and six senior citizens groups, three of which are sponsored by the Chicago Park District.

The *Social Services Directory* of the Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago lists eight private agencies serving the Far Northwest. Among these are the Danish Old Peoples Home, the Visiting Nurse Association of Chicago, and the St. Mary of Providence School for retarded girls. Several of these institutions are regional and serve areas beyond the Development Area boundaries. There are also institutions just outside the boundaries which serve the residents of the Far Northwest.

The community areas of North Park, Albany Park, Portage Park, Irving Park, and Dunning, with higher than city averages of persons over 65, are served by three senior citizens groups, which have limited facilities and programs. There is a need for a senior citizens center which would operate on a broader basis. Efforts could be made to seek out the talents of the elderly for community projects. The Commission on Senior Citizens sponsors a Foster Grandparents



Program whose members work with children at the Chicago State Hospital located at the edge of the Far Northwest Development Area.

There is also some current need to care for younger children. In none of the community areas of the Far Northwest does the percentage of working women with children under six years of age exceed the city average of 20.9 per cent. Although the figures are lower than the city-wide average, the Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago, in a recent study of day care needs, has indicated that the number of licensed services is inadequate in all of Chicago's community areas. Four all-day child care centers in the Far Northwest had a total capacity of 185 children in 1966; the estimated number of children in need of day care services is many times higher. In this area of service, the population over 65 would be a major source of people with the required time and skills.

The Inter-Religious Council on Urban Affairs' *Directory of Community Organizations in Chicago* lists no major community organizations for the Far Northwest Development Area. There are eight smaller community councils and community associations operating in the area.

### **Public Safety and Health**

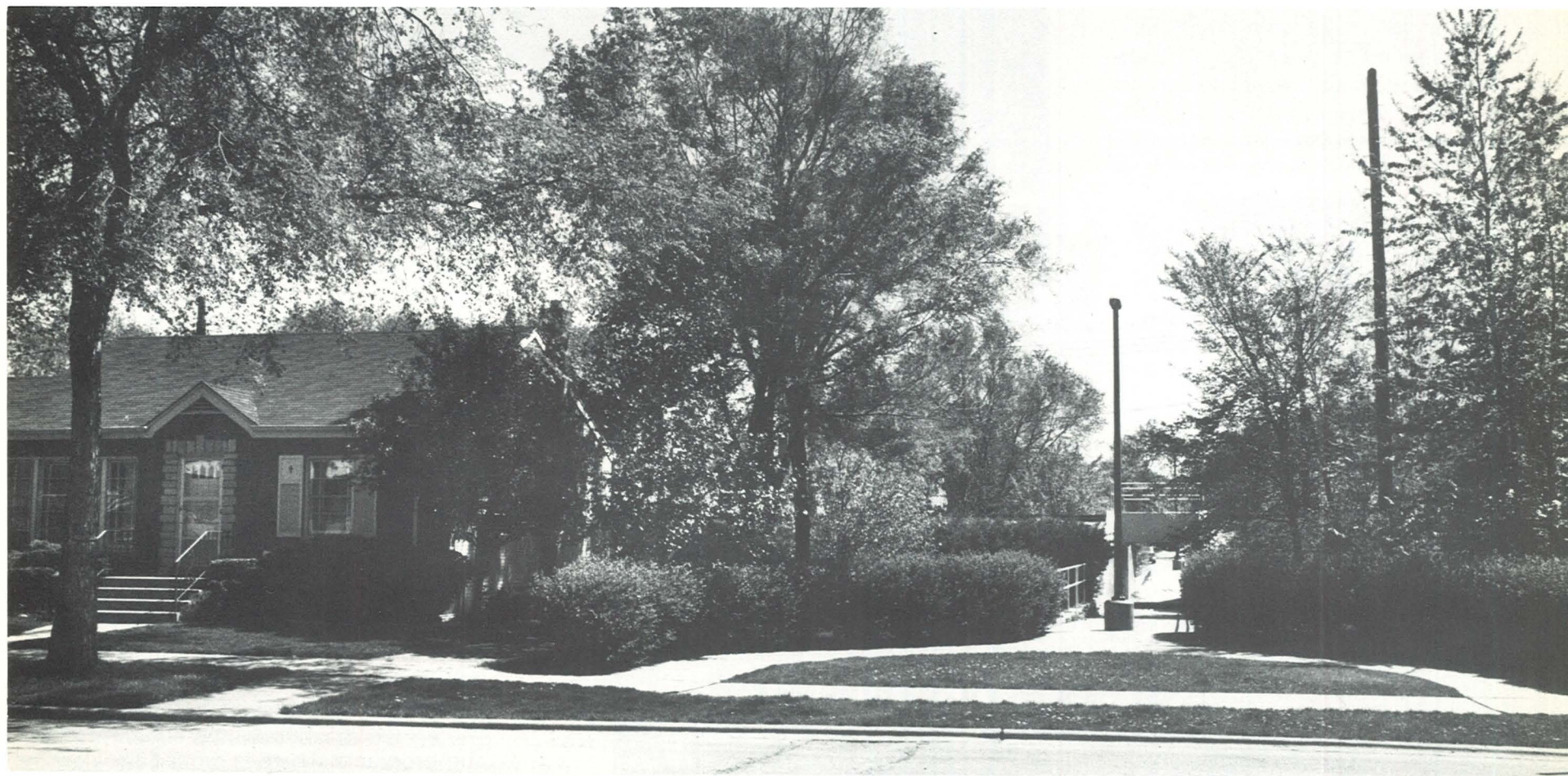
In recent years the programs of environmental health and safety agencies in Chicago have been expanded to include more intensive social and educational services as well as crime, fire, and disease prevention. These agencies emphasize that public safety and health are not the sole responsibility of government and have therefore initiated programs to encourage citizen support and involvement.

The 16th Chicago Police Department district covers all of the Development Area west of Cicero Avenue. Crime rates in the area are low in relation to the rest of the city.

Crime prevention necessitates citizen cooperation, both in crime reporting, as in Operation Crime Stop, and through positive actions designed to alleviate its basic causes.

In the field of environmental health full community cooperation is essential if programs are to have a maximum effect. The city's intensified air pollution abatement program will need support from Far Northwest industry and residents. As housing and industry are rehabilitated or new construction takes place, heating equipment which reduces air pollution should be installed. A new incinerator to serve the entire northwest side is scheduled for the Chicago and North Western Railroad yards in the Far West Development Area.

The 1967-1971 *Joint Capital Improvement Program* includes extensive improvements in sanitation facilities such as sewer lines and water mains. Also scheduled is a new fire station at 6430 N. Lehigh Avenue.



A short pedestrian way leading under a railway embankment provides a pleasant walkway connection for two streets.



## Business

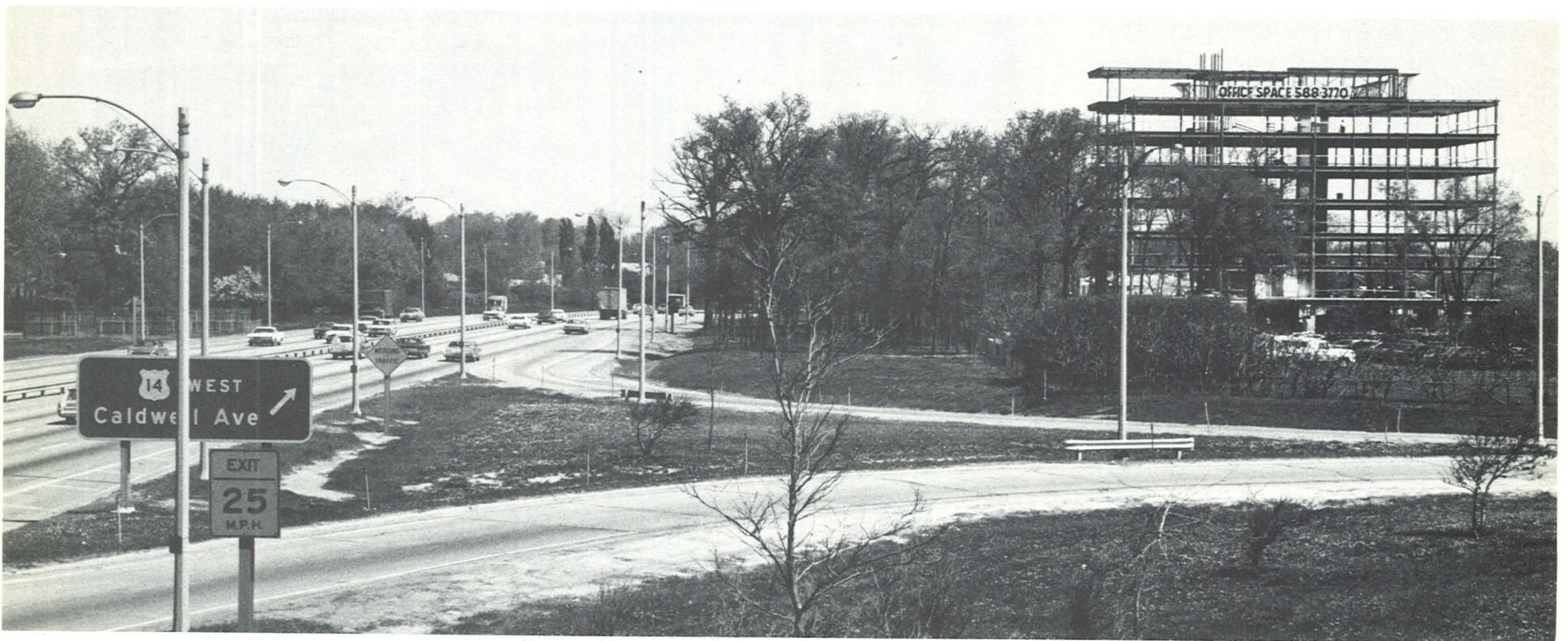
The major diagonal streets in the Far Northwest Development Area are heavily developed commercial strips. Businesses extend the length of Milwaukee Avenue. Mixed commercial and industrial areas are found along Elston Avenue, Northwest Highway, and Higgins Road. Irving Park Road, Harlem Avenue from Foster to Devon avenues, and Lawrence Avenue east of Cicero Avenue are also solidly developed commercial streets.

Commercial development along these streets began at a time when adjacent communities were more dependent than now on local facilities. As the communities continued to expand, commercial structures also expanded until the streets were almost completely lined with a variety of businesses.

The *Comprehensive Plan* delineates a city pattern of business centers with strip development reduced. A clustering of businesses acts to concentrate facilities and also releases much land along the major streets for residential and open space development. Clustering also carries the advantage of enabling the businesses to work together

to provide off-street parking facilities and to upgrade the physical appearance of the center. Increased buyer mobility and the attraction of outlying shopping centers indicate the need for rejuvenation of the area's shopping facilities if they are to remain competitive.

A regional business district located at the intersection of Milwaukee Avenue, Irving Park Road, and Cicero Avenue presently serves as the area's largest business center. A second smaller community business concentration is located farther north on Milwaukee Avenue at its intersection with Lawrence Avenue. Fairly large community business centers are also located at the Central-Devon and the Cicero-Peterson intersections. The Milwaukee-Lawrence and Milwaukee-Cicero-Irving Park shopping centers and numerous small neighborhood business centers are listed in The *Comprehensive Plan* as in need of improvement. Smaller neighborhood business centers throughout the area should be developed as centers containing other community facilities, such as libraries and health clinics. Additional parking is also needed in many neighborhood business centers.



Located near major routes of transportation, office parks such as this one will provide facilities for non-local office functions that do not need downtown locations.



To rejuvenate the physical appearance of the area's commercial centers, landscaped malls could be added. In the Lawrence-Milwaukee shopping area, such malls could be created by closing parts of Milwaukee Avenue. This would reduce traffic congestion and help to enhance the commercial center. A park-mall could also be created by closing a portion of Milwaukee Avenue farther south in the business concentration at the intersection of Irving Park Road, Cicero, and Milwaukee avenues. Both street traffic and shoppers would benefit from the redesign opportunities presented by the closing of portions of Milwaukee Avenue.

While the final planning for the Crosstown Expressway in the Development Area is still under study, the proposed routing in the vicinity of the Milwaukee-Cicero-Irving Park shopping complex would be designed to provide convenient access to available parking space in the commercial area. Improvement efforts by the local business community could result in a substantial increase in the parking facilities for this business center. The Lawrence-Milwaukee community shopping center would be able to draw from an increased trade population. The terminal stop of the new rapid transit will be one block from the shopping area and will tie in with a central bus terminal to be located on Milwaukee Avenue. Here again a landscaped pedestrian mall could be designed to link the transportation and shopping facilities.

Another type of business activity is being developed in the Far Northwest with the growth of new office buildings. Such buildings have been built in recent years along major streets to accommodate activities that can operate effectively outside Chicago's Central Business District. A five-story structure of this type is located in the Far Northwest Development Area at Devon Avenue and Pulaski Road.

A second type of office development is beginning in the area, as recommended by *The Comprehensive Plan of Chicago*. As part of the policy for business development, office parks would be located near expressway interchanges and rapid transit stops. These would be designed to provide for non-local office functions that do not require downtown locations. In keeping with this policy, a new office park is being developed at the junction of the Edens Expressway and Caldwell Avenue.

## Industry

Industrial development in the Far Northwest occurred in concentrations along the Chicago and North Western and the Milwaukee Road railways and in a strip between Foster and Pratt avenues, served by the Chicago and North Western Railway.

The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that industrial improvement take place through the replacement or rehabilitation of deficient structures, the provision of land for industrial expansion and parking, and the elimination of situations where mixes of industrial and other land uses create environmental problems.

Like the residential areas in the Far Northwest, industrial areas are generally well-preserved or new, requiring only occasional

rehabilitation. There is a good example of a well-planned industrial park in the north-east corner of the Development Area. This area, bounded by Peterson, Pulaski, Bryn Mawr, and the Chicago and North Western Railway, has access to both major streets and railroad facilities without disrupting adjacent residential neighborhoods. The development consists of modern structures with well landscaped grounds and adequate parking.

The immediate problem of most industries in the Far Northwest is the lack of adequate off-street employee parking and truck loading facilities. In some instances, parking or loading space was lost and never replaced when plants expanded. In the case of many older developments, such space was never

By closing off part of Milwaukee Avenue, landscaped greenways could be created to enhance this business center and reduce traffic congestion.





provided on the site. To retain a solid industrial base within the city, public assistance might be needed to provide land for expansion and parking in industrial areas. In the Far Northwest Development Area this might be accomplished by closing portions of diagonal streets such as Milwaukee Avenue, or the Northwest Highway, or by redeveloping small pockets of residential land now isolated within industrial districts.

### Transportation

The *Comprehensive Plan* cites five major elements that form the framework for transportation planning in the Far Northwest Development Area:

1. The construction of the Crosstown Expressway including express public transportation;
2. The development of a system of mile and half-mile streets to collect, carry and distribute through traffic, to divert that traffic from neighborhood streets, and to support convenient bus service to all residential areas;
3. The de-emphasis of several of the diagonal streets and the redevelopment of sections of these streets for other uses;
4. The reduction of safety hazards to both pedestrians and vehicles through the elimination of railroad grade crossings with major streets in the Development Area;
5. The extension of the Congress-Milwaukee subway line in the median strip of the John F. Kennedy Expressway, and the development of a new CTA terminal at Foster and Central avenues.

The Development Area has a high degree of accessibility to most other parts of the city along the Edens and Kennedy expressways. With the completion of the Crosstown Expressway accessibility will be further increased. The Crosstown Expressway will join the Kennedy and Edens expressways near the existing Kennedy-Edens junction.

The following streets in the Far Northwest are recommended by The *Comprehensive Plan* for improvement to major street status: Irving Park Road, Lawrence Avenue, Foster Avenue, Devon Avenue, Touhy Avenue, Pulaski Road, Cicero Avenue, Central Avenue Narragansett/Nagle Avenue, and Harlem Avenue. The North and Far North Development Area reports suggest consideration of the present Peterson-Ridge-

Hollywood connection to Lake Shore Drive as an alternative to the widening of Devon Avenue as a major east-west thoroughfare because of existing traffic and land use conditions. In the Far Northwest Development Area existing wide rights-of-way along Peterson Avenue, Caldwell Avenue, and Devon Avenue west of Central Avenue would permit development of this alignment as a major traffic route. Complementing the major streets would be a system of secondary thoroughfares at half-mile intervals, carrying bus service into residential areas and moving local traffic to and from the major streets.

The city-wide pattern of major streets at

one-mile intervals with secondary thoroughfares every half mile is disrupted in the Far Northwest by the Kennedy and Edens expressways, the Cook County Forest Preserves, two railways, and several diagonal streets—Higgins Road, Northwest Highway, and Milwaukee, Elston, and Caldwell avenues.

Continuous diagonal streets are the source of many of the traffic problems in the Far Northwest Development Area. These streets often cross major intersections, creating traffic congestion, turning difficulties and hazards to pedestrian safety. With the upgrading of mile and half-mile streets to major street standards, several of these diagonal streets should be limited to local traffic



The industrial park at Bryn Mawr and Pulaski provides ample off-street parking.





The Chicago and North Western Railroad commuter station in Norwood Park.



A new rapid transit line is under construction in the median strip of the John F. Kennedy Expressway.

or redeveloped for commercial parking, or for open space through park-mall development.

However, it may be necessary to retain Elston Avenue as a secondary artery as far north as Bryn Mawr Avenue to serve as a by-pass route for the Kennedy Expressway during periods of reconstruction or other periods of need. At complex six-leg intersections Elston Avenue should be realigned to reduce the number of traffic conflicts.

#### Transit

The Far Northwest Development Area is presently served by the Chicago and North Western Railway and Milwaukee Road commuter lines and by the Chicago Transit Authority bus lines. The railroads run on embankments south of Bryn Mawr Avenue. To the north, they often drop to ground level and intersect with major streets at grade. Such intersections are at Devon-Caldwell-Central, and along the North Western Railway at Kostner-Devon, Nagle, and Harlem. Grade level intersections should be eliminated for reasons of safety, and reduced traffic congestion.

The Chicago Transit Authority will extend its northwest subway route from its present terminal at Logan Square to a new terminal near Milwaukee-Foster-Central avenues via the median strip of the Kennedy Expressway. This terminal will be a transfer point for commuters arriving on CTA buses, from the North Western Railway commuter line, or autos. To encourage greater use of rapid transit service this terminal will provide a strong link to the Jefferson Park station of the North Western Railway, adequate bus parking and loading areas, and park-and-ride facilities. A connection between the Milwaukee Road commuter line and the Kennedy rapid transit line near Cicero and Montrose avenues would serve in the same way as the North Western transfer point.

In the future, express transit service should be extended further to O'Hare Airport. The *Comprehensive Plan* notes that express transit service should be provided in corridors of high accessibility along the Cross-town Expressway and along the alignment of either Lawrence or Foster avenue from Kimball Avenue to the Kennedy-Crosstown expressway interchange.

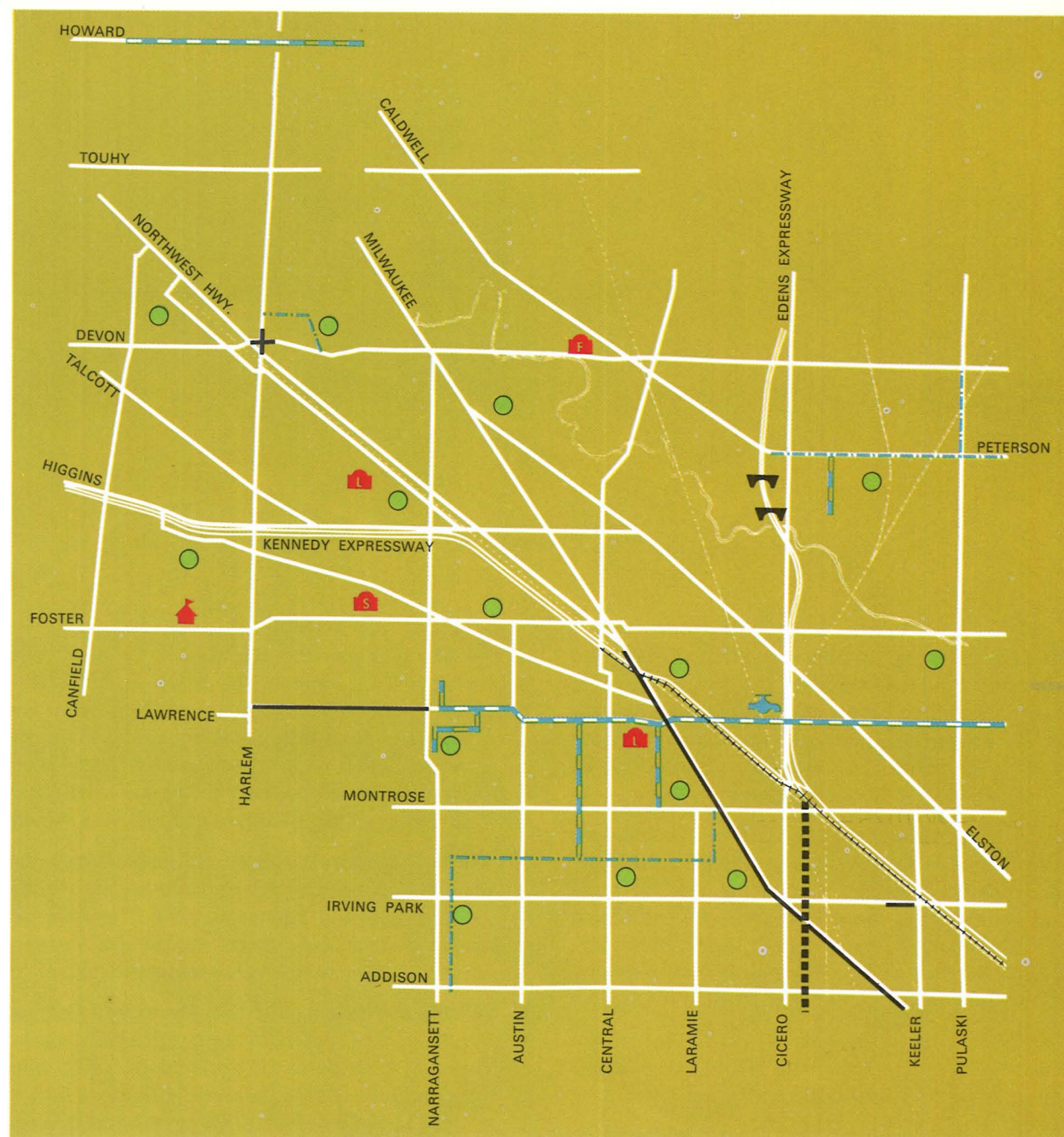


## Major Capital Improvements in the Far Northwest Development Area

The map illustrates major projects reported in the 1967-1971 *Joint Capital Improvements Program* as well as a number of additional projects scheduled since completion of the report. The Capital Improvements Program covers a five-year period and is revised annually and submitted to the Chicago Plan Commission for approval. The Plan Commission, under the inter-agency planning referral procedure, also reviews each project prior to construction to insure that projects are in conformity with *The Comprehensive Plan of Chicago*.

The projects identified on the map are at three different stages of development: projects recently completed, projects underway, and projects proposed within the next five years. Some area-wide projects, such as the recently completed comprehensive alley lighting program, are not mapped. In addition, several public agencies have initiated city-wide development plans which will result in additional recommendations for improved public facilities and services in this area.

The Crosstown Expressway location shown is approximate. Final alignment will be determined by detail planning studies.



Bridge and Viaduct Improvement



Street Improvement



Intersection Improvement



Water Pumping Station Improvement



Water Feeder Main



Sewer Improvement



Crosstown Expressway



Fire Station (New)



Sanitation Facility (New)



Public Library (New)



School (New)



Park Improvement



Rapid Transit Extension





## Summary

The illustration opposite this summary is designed to present an overview of the major concepts identified through the Development Area process at this stage. This makes it possible to see how each of these ideas contributes to the design of a total fabric for the Development Area.

**A.** The southeast section of the Development Area, bounded by Addison, Pulaski, Lawrence, and Laramie avenues is most in need of code enforcement and repair to rehabilitate and maintain the aging housing supply. Additional community services and facilities should be provided where needed.

**B.** Small clusters of housing southwest of the railroad line in Norwood Park should be improved by a program of intensified code enforcement.

**C.** The remainder of the Development Area should retain its high quality low density housing, with increased density housing at points along the major corridors of accessibility.

**D.** Priority should be given to the southern-most part of the Development Area for increased park acreage. Parks should be located next to new and existing school sites where possible to make maximum use of these facilities. The whole Far Northwest has adequate park acreage and residential open space. A major need is to landscape existing facilities to make them more attractive and useful.

**E.** The two major shopping centers in the Far Northwest, located at Milwaukee-Lawrence and Milwaukee-Irving Park-Cicero, are in need of some improvement. To enhance these commercial centers and reduce congestion, landscaped greenways could be created by closing off parts of Milwaukee Avenue. Both centers are in need of larger parking facilities. Close proximity to the new Kennedy rapid transit should also increase trade potential.

**F.** The terminal stop of the new Kennedy rapid transit will be located one block from the Milwaukee-Lawrence shopping concentration and could provide needed parking facilities for the business center. A landscaped mall could serve as a link between the two facilities. In the future rapid transit should be extended to O'Hare Airport.

**G.** The proposed Crosstown Expressway will join the Kennedy and Edens expressways near the existing Kennedy-Edens junction. The new expressway and its express transit will increase access to other parts of the metropolitan area.

**H.** Mile and half-mile streets are to be upgraded to primary and secondary thoroughfare standards. This will help to eliminate through traffic from local and residential streets and will create opportunities to de-emphasize diagonal streets. Diagonal streets could then be used for local traffic, parking, open space, or park-mall development.

**I.** North of Bryn Mawr Avenue, two railroad lines run at ground level and intersect with major streets at grade, causing traffic and safety problems. These grade level crossings should be eliminated.

**J.** According to long range plans of the Chicago City College Board, a full-time junior college campus will be located near the junction of the Crosstown and Kennedy expressways. The new campus should increase the availability of education to all residents of the Far Northwest.

Further improvements for the Far Northwest Development Area should include increasing and broadening the quality of education, as well as the physical facilities; expanding day-care and senior citizen services; and encouraging a higher degree of community participation and organization, especially in the rehabilitation and maintenance area.

## Planning Framework Far Northwest Development Area

Residential



Business



Institutional



Park



Industrial



**A** Rehabilitation and Maintenance

**B** Intensified Code Enforcement

**C** Maintenance

**D** Open Space and Recreation Needs

**E** Improved Shopping Centers

**F** Kennedy Expressway Rapid Transit

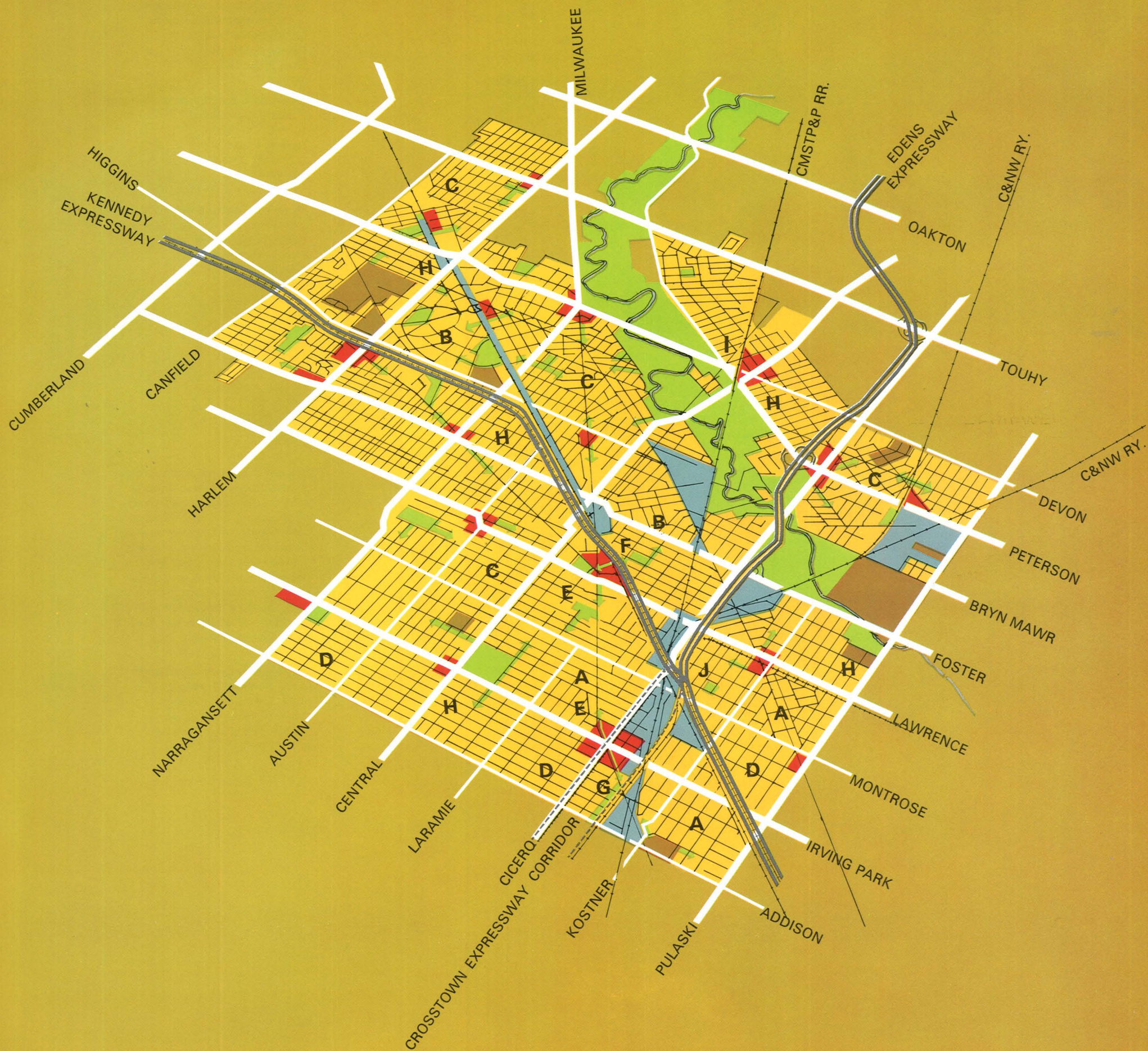
**G** Crosstown Expressway

**H** Major Street Improvements

**I** Grade-Level Railroad Crossings

**J** Junior College Campus







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